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DYSMOTILITY

Dysmotility refers to a condition of the digestive tract in which muscles of the tract become impaired. This results in changes in the speed, strength and coordination among the different digestive organs, leading to delays in bowel transit time, which is the time it takes for food to move from the mouth through the digestive tract and be passed as stool.

Dysmotility may lead to various complaints of the intestinal tract. A few of them are as follows:

- Acidity
- Bloating
- Heartburn
- Intractable hiccups
- Gaseous distension
- Chronic constipation
- Irritable bowel disease
- Stool leakage or incontinence
- GORD (Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease)
- Feeling of fullness after eating small amounts of food

CAUSES OF DYSMOTILITY

- Low grade inflammation of intestines.
- Poor immunity, leading to impaired barrier in intestine against disease causing organisms.
- Changes in the body's bio-chemistry.
- Inherited causes.
- Spinal injuries, chronic diabetes and Parkinsonism.
- Structural abnormalities.
- Thyroid disorders.
- Sedentary life style.
- Some drugs can interfere with normal functions.

MEASURING TRANSIT TIME

There are various clinical methods of monitoring transit time, including having the patient swallow dye filled capsules and

monitoring the release of the dye, or by adding isotopes to certain foods and studying their travel in the digestive tract.

DIETARY AND LIFE STYLE CHANGES

Sometimes making minor changes to lifestyle and diet can improve the transit time.

- Increase fibre intake to 25 to 30 grams, for constipation.
- Drink adequate water, as per the body's requirements (roughly 30cc per kg of body weight).
- Consume small meals with less fatty foods.
- Avoid skipping meals.
- Avoid caffeine rich foods on an empty stomach.
- Confirm with your doctor whether you are allergic to milk, wheat or any other foods.
- Avoid excessive sour foods.
- Keep a diary to track diet and digestive complaints.

References: Dysmotility. Medical University of South Carolina website. <http://www.ddc.musc.edu/public/diseases/small-intestine/dysmotility.html>. Accessed August 4, 2016.

